

GOULD LIBRARY
EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

The Holy Spirit

Our Silent Partner

An Exegetical Study of the Holy Spirit

By

ALVAH SABIN HOBART

Crozer Theological Seminary

Author of

"Tillage of the Heart," "Key to the New Testament"



PHILADELPHIA

THE JUDSON PRESS

BOSTON

CHICAGO

ST. LOUIS

NEW YORK

LOS ANGELES

KANSAS CITY

SEATTLE

TORONTO

Copyright, 1908, by
FLEMING H. REVELL CO.

Copyright, 1919, by
ELI S. REINHOLD, Director
of the
CROZER EXTENSION COURSE
of the
Crozer Theological Seminary
in which Course
"OUR SILENT PARTNER"
is a text-book

Could
BT
124
H62

Dedicated to

My Wife,

*at whose suggestion, and by whose
encouragement these thoughts have
sought the light*

PREFACE

THE author of these studies at one time became so bewildered by the various and conflicting views of the Holy Spirit, that he was disgusted at the very word. It became synonymous to him with illogical ideas and impossible expectations. It held up as attainable things that never are attained. So he for a time in self-defense against irritation and irreverence avoided the company of any who talked or prayed about the "Holy Spirit." But of course this could not continue with a Bible believing Christian. He therefore went at the task of finding for himself what the Scripture idea really is. These chapters are the result. They are not devotional, nor emotional, but exegetical. They are the fruit of sorrow, and of mental toil, out of misconception, and at the same time, for him at least, fragrant with victory. The path led through the dark forest to an open field, sun-kissed and fruitful.

A. S. H.

Index of Scriptures Quoted or Explained

Acts 8 : 14, 10 : 44, 19 : 6, p. 128.

1 Cor. 12 : 6, pp. 61, 97 ; 13 : 8-13, p. 85.

2 Cor. 1 : 18, p. 56 ; 3 : 18, p. 71.

Ephesians 1 : 45, p. 59 ; 4 : 4-16, p. 89 ; 5 : 18, pp. 113, 126.

Galatians 5 : 23, p. 76.

Hebrews 12 : 1-3, p. 126.

Isaiah 11 : 6, p. 41 ; 60 : 17, p. 40.

Job 33 : 4, p. 30.

John 3 : 3, p. 46 ; 3 : 12, p. 63 ; 6 : 29, p. 25 ; 8 : 31, p. 132 ; 15 : 26, p. 26 ; 16 : 8, p. 22 ; 16 : 13-15, p. 59.

Luke 1 : 51, p. 23 ; 1 : 78, p. 55 ; 6 : 12, p. 153 ; 18 : 1, p. 153.

Mark 4 : 26, p. 77.

Matt. 5 : 44, 24 : 42, p. 132.

1 Peter 1 : 3-11, p. 134 ; 4 : 5, p. 39.

Psalms 23, p. 41 ; 51 : 10-12, p. 38 ; 80 : 18, p. 39 ; 104 : 30, p. 15 ; 139, pp. 20, 54.

Philippians 4 : 18, p. 132.

Rom. 5 : 1, p. 38 ; 6 : 11, p. 39 ; 7 : 9, p. 40 ; 8 : 14, p. 55 ; 8 : 16, p. 72 ; 8 : 31, p. 73 ; 12 : 1, p. 130 ; 12 : 9, p. 17.

2 Tim. 1 : 12, p. 73.

1 Thess. 5 : 17, p. 153.

2 Thess. 1 : 13, p. 40.

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	9
-------------------------------	---

PART I

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH EVERYBODY

<i>The Author of Natural Life</i>	15
<i>The Holy Spirit Convicts the World of Sin</i>	22

PART II

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL CHRISTIANS

<i>Partnership in the Origin of the Chris- tian Life</i>	35
<i>Partnership in the Guidance of Chris- tian Life</i>	52
<i>Partnership in the Production of Chris- tian Character</i>	76

PART III

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH SOME CHRISTIANS

<i>Gifts of the Spirit</i>	89
<i>Gifts of the Spirit (Continued)</i> . . .	97

Contents

PART IV

HOW WE SHOULD DEAL WITH OUR HEAVENLY PARTNER

<i>Be Filled with the Spirit . . .</i>	113
<i>Cultivate the Partnership . . .</i>	126
<i>How to Cultivate the Partnership .</i>	134
<i>How to Improve the Spiritual Partnership</i>	153

INTRODUCTION

If there be any partnership of the Spirit.—PHIL. 2 : 1.

“FELLOWSHIP” in the old English of the New Testament meant what we in our American speech call “partnership.” “Fellowship of the Spirit” means, therefore, those activities of ours in which the Spirit has a part, the united endeavours of the Spirit and ourselves.

These united endeavours are far more numerous and fundamental than we at first thought are aware. But yet all Christian people are conscious of a mysterious, good something in their lives which exerts influences that are fundamental and formative.

In all theologies, under every creed, in every denomination that something is

Introduction

called, in the language of the Scriptures, The Holy Spirit.

To this power is ascribed the drawing of men towards Christ with a mysterious attraction, as the moon is said to draw the tides of the ocean. Under its life-giving impulses the heart, dead to holiness, is quickened. Warmed by its touch the affections go out towards God and men. Directed by its wisdom we follow the path of life in safety. Panoplied by its graces we are victorious over our spiritual foes. And ultimately we hope to be raised to glory by its invincible mightiness.

The methods of its operation vary with changing circumstances of the world's progress as the activities of the vital forces of a plant vary with the progress of the plant towards maturity. Now they make the stalk and now the leaf; now the bud and now the flower and fruit; but all the time they contribute towards the complete

Introduction

fruitage. So there are "diversities of operations but the same Spirit." In the days of Moses, or David, the influences of the Spirit were quite different in detail from His influences in the times of Jesus. And they are different now from what they were in the times of Paul. But yet we find in our lives certain marked experiences which belong in the same class, and are referable to the same source as the common experiences of Christian men in all the centuries.

There can be then no more important study for us than the activities, and methods of this Spirit. Ideas about it must be examined, formulated, tested, and it may be, reëxamined, until a definite, consistent idea has been reached, which like some other ideas in our religious life becomes a fixed quantity.

And each man gains by formulating for himself his ideas. They cannot be re-

Introduction

ceived from others in full maturity. To have their proper value they must be formed in our individual minds from the teachings of Scripture interpreted in the light of our own inner life. Then they will be determinative forces in our conduct.

And the only way to formulate them is for us individually to study the Scripture passages which speak of this theme. Sound ideas are ultimately determined by a combination of correct understanding of single passages with careful self-inspection.

To help in this is what these pages will undertake to do. They have been written, not for the expert scholar, nor primarily for the ministers, but for the intelligent church members who want to examine for themselves the groundwork of their doctrinal views about the *Holy Spirit*.

PART I

*The Spirit's Partnership
with Everybody*

The Author of Natural Life

The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.—
GEN. 1 : 2.

*Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created : and Thou
renewest the face of the earth.—*PS. 104 : 30.

*The Spirit of God hath made me : the breath of the Almighty
giveth me life.—*JOB 33 : 4.

THE first chapter of Genesis is the wonder of all literature. It deals with the greatest of all questions that men can consider. The origin of things interests, and puzzles all men. But this book speaks of it in a simple unastonished way as if it were only a common theme with the writer.

From the nature of the case the information could not be of an historical kind. There were no historians to make the record. The language is simple, but the theme is complex. Its figures and metaphors could not be used very accu-

Our Silent Partner

rately. There are indications that he who wrote had seen a mental vision in which in some dramatic way the events, and centuries of creation had passed before him, and he wrote a swift short outline of the things he had seen.

In this statement he begins by saying that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. They were "without form and void." That suggests a mass of homogeneous matter, not yet having taken any forms of beauty or life. And then in the second statement he wrote the method and power by which order was brought out of the chaos: variety out of the uniformity: life out of the lifeless. "*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" The Spirit of God is the author, the inventor, the practical manufacturer of the myriad forms of life which have come out of that once unformed and lifeless mass.

The Author of Natural Life

We are not concerned now with anything except the fact that God's Spirit is the source of life and beauty. The delicate petals, and the delicious perfume of flowers are both its product. The mighty mastadon, and the ichthyosaurus which have accomplished their mission and passed away, were invented by that Spirit. The microscopic forms of both germs and bacilli are the output of His factory. "In His hand is the breath of every living thing."

Such is the idea that prevailed among the holy men of Old Testament times. The words quoted at the beginning of this chapter are brief but pregnant expressions of it.

The chapters of this book are not intended for homilies. But in this beginning a few words of suggestion will not be out of place. We are to study the Holy Spirit not as a specifically Christian theme.

Our Silent Partner

Every man who thinks must come in touch with the theme. And every man must come in contact with the results of this power which is in all nature.

There is an intelligence in all nature which is unequalled by any human intelligence. Consider for example the adaptation of the human eye to its uses. How comprehensive the whole plan ! How adjustable to the variations of light and distance ! How expressive of varying mental states, at times flaming with anger, and again filled with tenderness ! All this was invented by the Spirit of God.

Notice the flower. With what consummate care it sorts out from the earth the material needed for its construction : how expert the chemistry which distills from the air its proper perfume : what delicate artistic sense is shown in the colours gathered from the sunlight to paint its petals : how infinite the skill to

The Author of Natural Life

put them all together in a flower: how persistently watchful is the mind which has preserved the process of this manufacture during the centuries so that the same colour and the same fragrance which delighted Eve in the meadow lily delighted Jesus in His day, and does the same to us now. Surely this is not a subject for only Christians but for all men who are "capable of being moved by a profound thought."

We need not here be perplexed by questions about the personality or the impersonality of the Spirit. For our present thought it is enough to see that this life-inventing, and life-sustaining Power is still doing its work. If there are new forms of life coming into being, the Spirit of God brings them to their being. If in any cases some forms of life have done their work and passed out of existence, it was the Spirit of God which dismissed them from existence. If there be some far-

Our Silent Partner

off destiny towards which nature is tending, and to which all the activities of earth are silently contributing, the control of them is with the Spirit of God.

This means that in the bodies of ourselves, as well as in the bodies of birds and beasts, the Spirit of God sustains the physical forces. We cannot escape its presence or its power.

“ Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit,
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there,
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me.”

This leads us to another consideration. We think of ourselves as dual beings—bodies and spirits. Our souls have a life in a sense apart from and above our physical life. And it is a wonderful life. The play of emotions and ambitions and

The Author of Natural Life

affections: the interplay of hopes and fears, of courage and despondencies, are infinitely mysterious. But the same Spirit of God which invented, and manufactured our physical bodies, invented and controls our spiritual being. In our religious life the Spirit must be as vital and controlling as it is in our physical life. We come to the consideration of our Christian activities, expecting to find this Spirit a living factor in them all.

And what confidence it gives us to think that the same skill which fashioned the flowers, and that planted the heavens with stars, is in Him on whom we depend to fashion and perfect our souls. This power it is which will change us into the image of Him who is in turn the image of the invisible God.

His very word of grace is strong
As that which made the sky ;
The voice that rolls the stars along,
Proclaims it from on high.

The Holy Spirit Convicts the World of Sin

*When the Paraclete (Holy Spirit) is come He will convict
the world of sin . . . in that it believed not on Me.*

—JOHN 16:8.

THE immediate idea of the passage seems to be that the generations following Jesus' earthly life would, as the Spirit quickened, and enlightened them, pass judgment on the world of His day, and say of it that it committed a great sin in refusing to accept Him. If Nineveh by its repentance at the preaching of Jonah condemned Jerusalem, much more will the believing generations condemn the age that crucified Him.

It has come to pass already in great measure that His age is condemned for sin, deep and radical. If it had not been blind and hard-hearted, it would not have al-

The Holy Spirit Convicts

lowed such an one as Jesus to go to Calvary, nor such as Paul and Peter, His apostles, to go to martyrdom.

Things have indeed changed since then. Those apostles do now sit on thrones judging Israel. The ideas of Mary have been fulfilled: "He wrought with His arm, He scattered those who in the imaginations of their heart were proud . . . the hungry He filled with good, and the rich He sent empty away." All the world says Israel was sinful in rejecting Jesus. Even the Jews of to-day, in their honour of Jesus as a prophet, indirectly condemn the age that slew Him.

But there is a larger sense in which these words are true. It is a noteworthy fact, that wherever the story of Christ has been fairly made known, the universal feeling has been that men ought to accept Him. They do not always do it, but there is a sense of self-condemnation for not

Our Silent Partner

doing it. In more recent years this fact has been getting a recognition greater than formerly. It is now recognized that the world at large is in a state of religious unrest. Old religions are getting unsatisfactory even to those who profess them.

Theologies that have been long accepted are being subjected to rigid analysis and restatement because the hearts of men do not find in them what satisfies their hunger. If men had no sense of sin unsettled for, they would not seek new relations and new theologies. When the man said to Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he not only asked for instruction, he also made a confession that he was without hope. The Holy Spirit is evidently doing in the world what the passage foretold He would do : namely, make the world feel that it is wrong in not accepting Jesus. Preach this old story anywhere, and it "stirs waters which never more will

The Holy Spirit Convicts

rest." This has a philosophic justification. There could not be any great turning to Jesus unless He was seen to be the God-sent Saviour. And if He be thus sent, there must come the duty which Jesus pointed out when He said, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." So long as that is not done there is a subtle sense of being in the wrong. This is abundantly verified in individual cases. Men feel self-condemned for not being Christian believers. How often we hear the confession: "I know that I ought to be a Christian." Many men sigh secretly when they see others going forward in a Christian life. No man congratulates himself as better than his neighbour because he is not a Christian. Somehow in ways beyond our ken the Holy Spirit has brought its influence to bear on men until so far as approval goes, they are practically agreed that He was right, and

Our Silent Partner

that no man is fully right who does not accept Him.

Again in John 15 : 26 it is written, *The Spirit of Truth shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness.*

This is a striking statement : “Do ye *also* bear witness.” The great argument for them to bear witness is that the Spirit is testifying. Their witness is the complement of His witness. It is a common experience of pastors that when they are deeply impressed to go and converse with individuals on the subject of faith in Christ, they find that the Spirit has been there before them and prepared the way for them. In the wireless telegraph system, the receiving instrument must be tuned to harmonize with the sending instrument. If it is not, the ether waves, laden with precious message from far at sea, will waste their energies, finding no haven to receive them. So the preaching must meet a

The Holy Spirit Convicts

heart tuned in some way to the message of the preacher, or it will find no acceptance, and have no potency.

This witnessing by the Spirit is done in various ways. One of the principal ways is to create a dim, vague vision of a character like Jesus as an ideal. The nations long for such a man as He. Their imaginations seek to create such an one. Their thought—to use a chemist's term—is saturated with the idea but it has not crystallized. When the story of Jesus comes it crystallizes at once. Men say, "Tell me that again." "This is what, for a long time, I have been looking for." The Christlike man is the delight of the nations. Admiration for Jesus is thus created beforehand. Whole nations are prepared before the missionary can do his work. No one finds fault with the kind of life Jesus taught us to live, and lived Himself. It is approved by those who do

Our Silent Partner

not attempt to live it. Even those who say that it is utterly impracticable in this present world, and can only have value as a far-off ideal to be dreamed about, admit its perfectness. Some explain this by calling it the fundamental deliverance of conscience. However it be explained, it remains a fact that the world has now a recognition of the worth of Jesus' life. No theory about it has universal acceptance; theology varies in its use and interpretation of it; but the thing itself all admire.

Another way in which the Spirit is testifying is through the judgment of men who are not disciples of what may, without offense we hope, be called the orthodox school. Those critics whose studies have led them to discard nearly all of the dogmatic theology of the Church, and to depart from the traditional views of the scripture, are nevertheless enthusiastic

The Holy Spirit Convicts

admirers of Jesus. Professor Harnack searches his vocabulary to find words sufficiently rich to tell his estimate of the Saviour.

Professor Weizsäcker, though chary about giving his personal opinion concerning Christ, gives his best thought to setting forth the origin and character of that marvellous person as portrayed in the New Testament, lighted up by the best historical research.

Professor Wernle vies with the best in his admiration of Jesus. With him Jesus is endowed with a self-consciousness more than prophetic. "He imparted new values to things. He scattered new thoughts broadcast in the world. But it was only His person that gave these new values and these new thoughts that victorious power which transformed the world. It is high time that the senseless chatter should cease about the religion of Christ which

Our Silent Partner

each Christian ought to acquire for himself. As if His power as Redeemer, His self-consciousness, His royal humility, could ever find a habitation in our little souls."

In still another way Christ is exalted. It is a time of earnest sociological study. In all the more advanced nations the serious question is, How can we equalize the privileges of men? How can we improve their conditions? All the answers point to the idea of a brotherhood. No privileged classes; no hereditary monarchies; no "submerged tenth." But as soon as the first effort to meet these demands is made, there arises the great need for a power to re-make the hearts of men. The selfishness that seems to be innate threatens every effort to realize the theories of sociology. But this very need is the one to which Christ most directly addresses Himself. The scientific sociolo-

The Holy Spirit Convicts

gist, whether he has faith in Christ or not, admits that if Christianity could only be attained, the aims of sociology would be already accomplished. Thus the truth about Christ is insinuated into science, and through its deliverances testifies to His excellence.

PART II

*The Holy Spirit's Partnership
with all Christians*

Partnership in the Origin of the Christian Life

IN the preceding pages attention has been called to the fact that all natural life is due to the Spirit of God. But there is with us all a sense of a kind of life which is not simply physical. It is not easy to define. It is called, as accurately as it can be called, "Soul life." The life which the soul lives in the body. But some one asks, What is the soul? and, How are we to identify its life in ourselves? Perhaps the most direct way is to ask, What in us is it that gets angry, or feels sad; that at times rises to great courage, and at other times is timid and fearful? Find that and we have found the soul. It lives in the body, makes itself known through the body, and yet is very

Our Silent Partner

really and unmistakably different from the body. This is the part of us which we think of as leaving the body at our death. The Scripture speaks of it as "going to God who gave it."

That soul has its experiences. Joy and sadness; hope and despair; anger and kindness; faith and doubt, these come in succession and fill the time. The whole series of experiences which the soul thus has, constitutes the soul's life as the series of bodily experiences constitutes the body's life.

The Spirit of God is the author of this in the same sense that He is the author of the bodily life. But in this kind of life it is common to speak of the Spirit of God as the Holy Spirit, because these activities are in connection with moral beings in whom holiness is a requirement.

But there is a kind of life belonging to this soul which is called the Christian life.

Origin of the Christian Life

It has all that was good in the former soul life, and more. If there was any sense of God, any yearning for goodness, any faint hope for another life in which the yearnings here will become rich realities,—all these are emphasized, and are met with promises of fulfillment. The Christian life is the blossom on the natural and the spiritual life. It is the realization of the proper destiny of man. This Christian life is not a spontaneous one. There does not lie in the soul alone the “promise and potency” of it. It is not a “purely human product.” It is “God working within us to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Its origin runs back into those depths of our life where the will of God and our own personality are woven mysteriously together into that wonderful and beautiful fabric which we call the “new creature.” This is the life we are to study now.

It is an axiom of good interpretation

Our Silent Partner

that the sayings of Scripture grew out of experiences. They are not academic theories. When the Psalmist wrote, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me," he had felt the need of it. When he wrote, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation," he had once been joyful in God and for some reason had ceased to be so. When Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God," he had known the feeling that God was at war with him, and now that peace had been declared. In this study the endeavour is to identify in ourselves the experiences which gave shape to the language, so that we may have not merely a study of Christian language, but a study of Christian life.

Of the leading passages which speak of the origin of the Christian life, we may consider first one of Paul's great statements :
God, who is rich in mercy, for His great

Origin of the Christian Life

love wherewith He loved us, hath quickened us in Christ (Eph. 2 : 4, 5).

This word "quicken" meant in the old English of our Bible "to make alive." We get its meaning plain in the first Epistle of Peter. "He will judge the quick and the dead"; and in Romans 6 : 11, "quicken our mortal bodies." But in its figurative use we find it in Psalm 80 : 18, "Quicken us and we will call on Thy name." It means now to make "keenly sensitive." It points to a condition when the facts and duties of religion made little or no impression upon us. We were not rebellious towards God, but insensible to Him. We saw sin with little clearness. God's goodness was hardly noted. The cross of Christ had no meaning. It was a literary phrase to indicate some poetic idea of the minister. We had no concern about the future. But there came a time when we saw that we were not living as it

Our Silent Partner

was our right and duty to live. Some of us saw sin in its enormity ; others saw ingratitude as a mountain of wrong which was upon us ; Paul described his feelings by saying, "The law came, sin revived and I died." There are no common phrases with which to tell the varied and various experiences of our souls as they were "quickened," or "sensitized." But as we think back to it there is one thing common to all our experiences. That "quickening" was not something that we sought, or that we brought upon ourselves. Paul's word tells our case : "God quickened us." Our reasonings may seek to explore beyond that, but our consciousness stops there. *God, who is rich in mercy, quickened us.*

We have another passage. "*God hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*" (2 Thess. 2 : 13).

Origin of the Christian Life

This, like the other passage, turns our eyes back to the earlier experiences. A man's central controlling power is found in his heart attitude towards God. If he has hostility or ill feeling towards God he is a rebel. If he is simply indifferent, and ignores the thought of his Creator he is ungodly, or non-godly. Both these attitudes are unholy. No man can receive what his Maker desires him to possess while his heart is either hostile or indifferent. No man can do his best who is without the help and inspiration which comes from feeling that he is in harmony with his heavenly Father. The first and vital thing is, therefore, that his attitude to God be made holy. His heart must be submissive. This state is described by the word "repentance." It is God enthroned in the heart. Its language is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" or "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Paul in-

Our Silent Partner

timates that this "sanctification," this making holy the will, precedes the belief of the truth, and is a first thing in "salvation," or the Christian life. And this is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. That sanctifying of the will, so that it turns waitingly and trustingly towards God, His Spirit mysteriously accomplishes. Our psychology may press inquiry further back, but, as in the other case already mentioned, consciousness begins with the experience described. "Born, not by the will of man, but by the will of God." We all feel that our Christian life did not begin by a discovery. Its beginning was not a product of our own. But it began by an answer to a call in us, yet not of us. A change in our attitude towards God came. A hunger was created. God came into our life. He has been ever since the senior and silent partner in our religious experiences.

Origin of the Christian Life

“Here, as at the beginning of all religious movements, we are in the presence of the absolute in its creative power; the ultimate cause lies beyond the range of historical inquiry.”

We have another passage in which not only the fact but the reason for the fact is given that the Christian life is from the Holy Spirit.

“Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3 : 3).

This is a perplexing passage because of its fullness of ideas and its figurative form.

We inquire first, What were the conceptions of the kingdom of God in the minds of those that heard Jesus say this? We know from all the Old Testament, and from some of the New Testament, that the Jewish people looked forward to a golden age. Their ideas about it were vague, various, but not uncertain. One of the prophets

Our Silent Partner

had said, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stones, iron." Another, seeing in his prophetic vision the peacefulness of the kingdom, wrote, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Whenever a prophet had a vision of the future, he at once summoned the strongest expressions, and the richest metaphors to describe what his heart saw. We can readily appreciate the situation if we undertake to describe our own conception of our own messianic kingdom. What is our idea of heaven? How the imagination kindles when we try to tell what we expect to have and to see there! We al-

Origin of the Christian Life

most instinctively fall back on the apocalyptic language of the New Testament. Now and then some one has attempted to tell the idea in modern language, as the writer of "Little Pilgrim," or "Gates Ajar," or Bickersteth's "Yesterday, To-day and Forever." But even these well-meaning books awaken a curious mixture of fear lest they are sacrilegious in attempting to tell about the "Unspeakable things." The favorite metaphors come from the book of the Revelation, in which the City of God gives the shape to our thoughts.

The Jews expected as ardently as we. They used the imagination as we do, but they conceived of it all as in this world and of a material kind.

Of course the terms of admission to that kingdom were important. From their point of view the first requirement was that the blood of Jacob ran in the veins. The twelve tribes of Israel were the eligible

Our Silent Partner

persons for that coming kingdom. A second requirement was that these favoured ones had not by idolatry been "cut off from the people." And a third requirement was that a certain amount of ceremony should be performed. These requirements were as generally accepted as we of this day insist that confession and church membership are conditions for our heaven. Nicodemus was one of the teachers of Israel. He was accustomed to teach these things. But John the Baptist had been preaching there, and had said that the approach of the kingdom was at hand. But he had raised some question about the terms of admission. Nicodemus wanted to get the facts. He was in an inquiring state of mind. So he went to Jesus by night to find out more. It is in the interview he had with Jesus that the words we are considering occur. We must therefore read them so far as we can in the light of

Origin of the Christian Life

the mental circumstances, for Jesus was replying, not to our inquiries, but to those of Nicodemus. We must take into account also that the people of the East expressed themselves in figurative speech much more than we Americans do with our practical turn of mind, and our telegraphic style of saying things. And especially was this true with the writer of this gospel. We find here such terms as "the bread of life," "the water of life," "the light of life," "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," "ye must eat of My flesh," "ye must drink of My blood." This habit of striking metaphor-making must be considered in this passage.

We notice also that it is not a passage dealing specifically with spiritual biology, and therefore its terms are not used with biological accuracy. It is not a discussion of "the psychology of religious experience," though it touches some of its phases. But

Our Silent Partner

it is in answer to a practical inquiry how a man can enter the kingdom of God. For that is implied in the question of Nicodemus.

The key to the right understanding is to be found in the term "kingdom of God." One needs to know what he is to enter before he can well determine how to enter it. The term is used no where else in John. It is used by Luke, and by Mark. Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven" instead. John uses generally the term "eternal life" to indicate that which is the object and aim of the man of God. With him "eternal life" is not future, nor is it dependent on surroundings. It is not merely everlasting—a wicked life might last always. It is a kind of life which begins here, and goes on into eternity. It is a life of faith in Jesus as teacher and Saviour. He that hath the Son hath that life. "This is life eternal

Origin of the Christian Life

that they should know Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." The kingdom of God is the company of those who have that kind of life. To begin that kind of life is to enter that kingdom.

Second, how then can we secure that kind of life? The answer is, "A man must be born from above," to be able to live that kind of life. But this "born from above" is another metaphor. Its thought seems to be,—not to begin a new existence as some new species of beings, but—to begin to live a new kind of activity in the old existence. Not to have something in us which was never before in us, but by yielding to the Spirit's guidance, to put what has always been in us to better uses under better guidance. It is not as when men put a new stop in an organ in order to get musical effects for which there is no provision in the organ, but rather to get the organ, as it was, better played. The

Our Silent Partner

harp in some hands has little of music in it, but the harp in David's hands was a wonder worker. It could bring the reason of Saul back to its home. And the heart of man under the influences of the Holy Spirit is capable of the "eternal life" without any new faculties. Self-centred, we are not able to live it. Paul alone was "touching the law, blameless" : but with Christ he was immeasurably better. In all the world the highest results are attained only by the combination of human and divine action. God made the forests, but He has never made a farm, or a garden. Man *with* God has done that. God made the quarries, but He never made a cathedral. Man *with* God has done that. The most beautiful flowers, the best vegetables, the swiftest and most enduring horses, the strongest beasts of burden, are all the product of man's effort *with* God. And the same truth holds in the religious

Origin of the Christian Life

realm. Man without revelation has been in some things very good, but the margin between Saul of Tarsus and Paul the apostle is wide as conceivable. Saul was man-made, Paul was the product of God and Saul. It has ever been given to man to be honoured as a partner with God, a fellow labourer. Except a man be thus a partner he cannot enter the kingdom of God because he cannot live the "Eternal life." But if he comes into a conscious partnership with God, he does live a new kind of life. Not only are the old experiences made better, but he has new ones which do not cloy, nor go out of fashion. They are enduring in character, and he is in the kingdom of God.

He is living the "Eternal Life."

Partnership in the Guidance of Christian Life

WHAT it is that shapes the course of a man's life after he begins Christian service, is a great question for the psychologist. One says "motive determines it. We choose the path which has the strongest motive." Another later view pushes the question further back and asks, "What is the stronger motive? Why is it stronger? and, Whence does it come?" "Motive grows out of our likings, and our dispositions," says one, "and our inquiry brings us back to the disposition." Still another says, "Our ideals are the real controlling forces of life." Our concern with these questions is simply to show that

Guidance of Christian Life

the problem of guidance in religious matters is in its leading features parallel with the problem of life.

The fundamental fact is that Christians all have an experience of guidance. The passages of Scripture chosen for consideration here are various expressions of that experience. Can we identify in ourselves the experiences which lie back of these expressions?

We are all more or less conscious at times of something stronger than ourselves, which by a mysterious sort of compulsion, determines for us which way we go. Other than Christian men have the same experience. They say, "I do not know what made me do it. I seem to have been swept along that way in spite of myself." If the way turns out to be an agreeable way, they call it Providence. If it be not an agreeable way, they are perplexed and call it a "mystery of life."

Our Silent Partner

It is not an easy task to understand one's own guidance, and it is yet more difficult to explain it to others. But the idea of "guidance" is universal. With the Christian of any considerable degree of maturity, this idea is more than "guidance," it is a "Guide." With the Psalmist it took form in the words, "If I dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, Thy right hand shall hold me." With David it said, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." Zacharias said, "The dayspring from on high . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace." And Paul wrote his idea, "All things work together for good to those who love God." Professor Gilmour said, "He leadeth me." Newman, recognizing the same fact in life and rejoicing over it, prayed, "Lead Thou me on." There is no more constant, universal, and comforting thought among Christians of every

Guidance of Christian Life

name, than that guidance is exercised over them by the Lord Jesus.

But it does not meet the whole situation to say or to think that there is a Guide. We cannot be mere passive souls under His guidance. Both our instincts and our intelligence insist that we have a hand on the wheel. Guidance is exercised not merely over us, and upon us, but through us. It must be "God working in us to will and to do His pleasure." How is this guidance made effective? Several of the expressions concerning this matter will be considered here to get a resultant, perspective view.

Led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8 : 14).

This describes those experiences in which we have strong impressions of duty, which we do not analyze but follow. Perhaps a more careful self-inspection would give us an analysis. We might find the impression is made up of habit, and conscience,

Our Silent Partner

and the quick action of moral judgment. But we do not thus analyze. We follow a strong impression that we ought or ought not to do so and so. In a prayer-meeting we rise and speak a word of testimony; under a temptation we turn and go away; or in a time of real deliberation we decide without formulating our reasons. Such actions, for such unanalyzed reasons, are not only common with us, but they are the prevailing ones of our lives.

The eyes of your heart being enlightened that ye may know the hope of His calling, the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the power of God towards you (Eph. 1 : 18).

In this case guidance is more easily resolvable into the thinking, and the affectional elements. "Heart" in the Scripture is the moral nature. This implies that moral judgment does not see in their true light the external facts of the religious

Guidance of Christian Life

life. Some things are valued at less than they are worth ; other things are over-estimated ; hence the decisions are erroneous. Paul prays here that the Lord will so enlighten the moral vision that the facts will be clearly seen ;—that men will know the hope of his calling and thus be held steadfast in the Christian way. In experience this is one of the most mysterious and yet most common facts. We think about religious matters at one time and they are very commonplace ; at another they appear to be of the utmost importance. One day we see ourselves with great complacency, and the next day we seem to ourselves to be the most ungrateful of men. At one time we hear about the love of Jesus, and it hardly awakens response ; at another we are moved as with a hand from heaven. These visions of things—for no word so well describes them as “visions”—constitute a large part

Our Silent Partner

of our guidance in life. And when we have seen them they continue to affect our judgment of religious things ever after. As when a man has seen a city he can never read about it or think about it just as he did before, so these visions of truth necessarily modify all after conduct. These visions are brought about by the normal working of the mind and the heart, but they work with greater than common efficiency. Paul calls it the Lord "enlightening the heart." As the sun shining on the fields in a warm June day makes more flowers to blossom on the plant and causes larger flowers, but does no violence to the law of the plant growth, so the Spirit may be said to affect all the faculties involved in the new view of truth without doing any violence to the integrity of our personal responsibility. It is guidance, but guidance through the more subtle avenues to the centre of life.

Guidance of Christian Life

He will take of Mine and show it unto you (John 16 : 13--15).

That is a correct judgment which says that the Holy Spirit does not testify concerning Himself. In a half complaining mood men sometimes wish that the Spirit would make Himself manifest to our own consciousness in a more unmistakable way. And it is not unusual for men to think that they are destitute of the highest form of guidance because they do not feel as if the Holy Spirit were upon them. But all that is thrown out here. He will not testify of Himself. If that be true then when men are most under His guidance they will think least of the Holy Spirit. The minister who in preaching is most guided in his utterance will not be thinking, "O what a splendid help I am getting, what power I am having," but his guidance will be manifest in that he sees the truth about Jesus most clearly. He

Our Silent Partner

will feel in his heart a sense of devotion, and confidence, and almost pride in Jesus. He will see the sin of men as more awful ; he will see the work of Christ as fitted to save men ; he will see the perspective of history so clearly that Christ will be the centre of it all : the future will be filled with undefined hope : the present a glorious service of faith and love. When men preach thus the congregations will go away saying, I never saw the truth about Jesus quite so clearly as to-day. "He will take of Mine and show it unto you." "He will bring to your remembrance what I have said unto you." In a similar way the Spirit shows the truth to us who are not preachers. Jesus is our adopted ideal. That ideal has power on us in proportion as we see it clearly. When the Spirit helps most, we see it best. Seeing, we are moved by it and directed by it to the best advantage. Thus it becomes our guid-

Guidance of Christian Life

ance. But the guidance reaches the source of life through the same channels that any other guidance reaches it.

These sample expressions, chosen out of many, show us that the idea of the Scripture writers concerning the Spirit's guidance is such that various metaphors are necessary to give it adequate expression. To use Paul's words, "There is diversity of operation but the same Spirit." When the pilot takes charge of the ship to bring it through a dangerous channel, all the forces of the ship are under his direction, and he may order the sails set if the wind favours, or furled if it does not favour: he may signal "full ahead" to the engineer, or "slow and steady," and at the same time hold the wheel. So the Guide of our life not only has power to touch directly the helm of our conduct, but He reaches it by working through all the natural and God-given channels—intelligent view of

Our Silent Partner

the facts, great dominant motives, thrilling fears, uplifting of gratitude, or any other means by which we shall not only do right, but grow right by the doing of it. It may be our prayer, therefore,

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening power,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.

There seems to be no room, therefore, for the expectation that the Spirit of God will exercise His guidance over us, or upon us, in such a way as to put out of commission the faculties by which we were to be naturally guided. If it has ever been true in some cases, that men have for a time become impersonal machines to be turned whithersoever the Spirit willed, it has been temporary, and much inferior to the ordinary way of guiding us by a full use of our minds, hearts, and consciences.

Guidance of Christian Life

In John 3 : 12, we read between the lines that the Holy Spirit reveals His future activities through His present ones. *"If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?"*

We all have a feeling of sympathy with Nicodemus in his perplexity over the meaning of Jesus' word about the being "born from above." We hold the abstruseness of the subject as a sort of defence against the charge of guilt in our ignorance. But Jesus seems to blame Nicodemus for not knowing. "Art thou a teacher in Israel and knowest not these things?" He says. And there must be some degree of blame on us if, after all the teaching of Jesus with which we are familiar, the matter is still one of perplexing wonder instead of thanksgiving. There must be some standpoint from which to look at the matter which will

Our Silent Partner

make it plain to him who seeks to know. To find this viewpoint is the aim of this study.

At the first we must notice a peculiarity in the language which our modern speech leads us easily to overlook. It reads, "If I have told '*you*' earthly things and '*ye*' believe not." Compare this with the fifth verse, which reads, "I say unto '*thee*.'" The "you" is plural, not singular. A paraphrase would read, "If, while I have been preaching to you teachers and leaders of Israel things that are relatively of an earthly character, and you do not credit My teaching, how will you do so if I attempt to tell you the more spiritual and heavenly things?" It is not merely a difficulty which belongs to Nicodemus, but to all his class. And the "earthly things" are not merely the statement about the being "born from above," but includes the former teaching of Jesus which had created so

Guidance of Christian Life

much stir among the elders of the Jewish Church. It covered the substance of that teaching which we have preserved for us in the Sermon on the Mount. It was moral instruction, and moral insight which were concerned. The man who does not see the force and validity of such things as these will not see the force or beauty of the things in the kingdom of God even if they are told to him.

The assumption under all this is that there is no wide line of demarkation between the things of the kingdom of God, and the things of moral value here and now. It is an assurance that the kingdom of God, of which He was the great teacher, is a projection of moral principles and spiritual facts into the future. A maturing of things which have their embryonic stage in the common relations of life. The kingdom of God is the company of those who are influenced by the Spirit of

Our Silent Partner

God. And to know about it one must begin his examination where the Spirit of God begins to do its work. Nicodemus' question, "How can this be?" should have been, "Why must this be?" If a man is blind to what is the matter, he cannot see to remedy the matter. The doctor who fails in diagnosis is not competent to administer remedies. If Nicodemus had studied the idea of morality well, and had watched his own heart carefully, he would have changed his question into the prayer of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

The Saviour said that the kingdom of God is progressive. It is "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." One is unfitted to teach the science of corn-raising who does not know how the seed sprouts and the plant develops. So one cannot master the larger things of

Guidance of Christian Life

the kingdom of God unless he is clear in his ideas about the initial effects of God's spirit in the hearts of men.

Henry George said that the right way to solve a social difficulty in a small community is the right way to solve it in a large one. Similarly we may say that the way to be right in one soul, is the way to be right in all souls.

What is the effect on a man's idea of righteousness when he has the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit? Does it not always make righteousness appear as a much more important, and difficult thing to reach? That is the dawn of the idea of righteousness which becomes the noonday sun in the kingdom of God. How does the enlightenment of the Spirit affect a man's sense of his own need of help? Does it not always impress him with a sense of need from above? That is the constant, habitual feeling in the

Our Silent Partner

kingdom. In the beginnings of its work the Spirit creates a longing for holiness, a drawing towards God, an appreciation of Jesus, an interest in other men. And all these are the great main currents of life in the kingdom of God. And when a man thinks into these primary experiences he will not have difficulty in seeing the need of a life "from above," but will see that to have that kind of life is the great climax of existence.

And so when a man in any particular crisis, feeling his insufficiency to meet the moral stress upon him, cries out, "O God, help me in this time of my need," he acknowledges that to do his best and to do his duty he wants and needs the partnership of God. And if in this one thing he can do the best only with that partnership, he confesses that in all his life he needs that partnership. But that is being "born from above." The man who has help in

Guidance of Christian Life

one moral crisis has, in so much of his life, lived "from above." If the main current of his life be thus helped, he is living the "from above" life, and that is the "Eternal life."

He who understands this will have no difficulty in understanding the doctrine of Christian guidance and help in all things.

The stereopticon operator puts a little slide not bigger than a three cent piece into the lantern, and we see a picture ten feet square on the screen. But it is a reproduction of the slide. All its colours and proportions are the same. A man's first actions under the influence of the Holy Spirit are the slide of God's whole dealings with him.

There follows from this a great wisdom. We need to study Christian experience. It is there we get the living and never out-grown instructions about the kingdom of God. When we seek to interpret the

Our Silent Partner

Scripture sayings, comparison with experience is the final test of a wise interpreter. When we seek to prophesy what will be the effect of any teaching in a community, the effect on a single soul is a fair hint of its larger effect. When we think ahead into the next world, we shall follow Jesus' thought if we believe that the kingdom of God will be only an enlarged and perfected edition of that same kingdom in a man's heart here and now. The best ideas attainable concerning that time is given us by Paul when he says we have in the spiritual experiences which faith now brings to us the "earnest of our heavenly inheritance." We are not to be surprised by new and unheard of things in the next world, for God has already revealed its character to us by His Spirit. This life of faith is the alphabet by which we read the abundant literature of Christian life.

Guidance of Christian Life

Again, Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord we are changed into His image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In this we get a most accurate psychology interwoven with explicit teaching. The Jews of whom he wrote at that time had heard the story of Jesus, but they saw "no beauty in Him that they should desire Him." Paul says that the reason was a "veil was on their hearts." But when they came to have a truly Godward leaning, they would find the veil removed. For we who have believed with open face behold as in a glass (when we read the gospel) the glory of the Lord, and are changed into His image. It is first in order to "see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." But to see God's glory in Him is to see Him as "glorious." It is now well known that ideals are the moving forces that make us better men and

Our Silent Partner

women. But ideals are always, to those who have them, beautiful and desirable. To see Jesus as glorious is to see Him as ideal, and at once to desire His image. This desire becomes the changer of our life. By its constant influence we are transformed, changed into His image. This action in this subtle but normal way is ascribed to the Spirit. Thus the Christ-likeness is neither God's work, nor man's work, but a true partnership. Our fellowship is with God and with His Son Jesus Christ working by His Spirit to will and to do.

These sample passages show us how we are to expect the Holy Spirit to assist in the perfecting of our Christian life. It does not break up the normal workings, but by a sweet insinuation of itself into the life, it brings to pass the transformation of men into the likeness of Christ.

The Spirit itself bears witness with our

Guidance of Christian Life

spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8 : 16).

We desire to know our relation to God. To doubt our acceptance with Him is to cut the nerve of life's enjoyment, and of religious activity. We have heard of an evangelist who used to say that he was so great a sinner that he had exhausted the grace of God, but he was still able to urge others to accept the gospel. But such cases are almost impossible. It is the man who can say, "I know whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him," who can persuade and exhort us with power. It is the man that is "persuaded that neither life nor death can separate him from the love of God" who endures all things in the steadfastness of hope.

And yet we have heard it said that it is not becoming for weak sinners to say that they are sure of their salvation. Our text

Our Silent Partner

gives us absolution from the sin of presumption when we say we know we are God's children.

But the complaint that we are over-sure is justified unless we remember that there are more ways than one to be sure. To overlook this is one of the most common errors of men in their consideration of the whole matter of religion. They seek a logical certainty. Because we cannot bring a photograph of the risen Lord, they say His resurrection is not and cannot be proven. Because we have no written account of the inspiration of the prophets, therefore we do not know they were inspired. How shallow this reasoning is can be seen by asking how we know that water quenches thirst? How do we know that a sunset is beautiful? How do we know that we love anybody? How do we know that we are in good health? There is a sense of being at peace with God which does not come as

Guidance of Christian Life

the conclusion of a syllogism. It is an inside sense of the fact. It is not impartable to others. It does not give account of itself to our own judgment, but it exists in the heart. It makes us look up and say "Our Father in heaven." This is what is meant by the words of Paul given above. There are other ways of knowing. John, for example, says, "We know because we love the brethren." We may reason about it. We may believe the word of Jesus. All these are witnesses which are important. They guard us from false security. But there is a witness in the heart which must come at the last to make our security a sweet, blessed experience.

Partnership in the Production of Christian Character

The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.—GAL. 5 : 23.

THERE is no passage which gathers up so fully and so beautifully the net results of the Spirit's work in the Christian as this passage.¹ The results of the Spirit are various.

The metaphor itself is full of suggestion. It takes us out into the king's garden. Our mind has visions of quiet, and half solitude. Beautiful skies bend over us. Suns shine upon us. We think of April showers, of beautiful blossoms, of breezes laden with

¹ It is not by an error that it is here called "fruits." It is only because the bondage of the Greek idiom is thrown off that we may express the thought in American-English.

Production of Character

delicious fragrance. We remember fallen petals, and sombre days when the little green apples hang unlovely in the shade of leaves. Then a vision of growing fruit swelling daily into full proportions. The sun kisses it : rains enrich it : time ripens it : and it is gathered into the hand of him for whom it has grown. Fruit suggests time and patience. It has need of storms, as well as sun. Frosts of winter, as well as rains of summer minister to its growth.

Fruit tells of the mystery of personal life : "Every seed after its kind." It grows through the operations of mysterious life forces. We do not understand them ; we cannot define them. Their method of work eludes our description. "A man casts seed on the earth, and sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows up, he knoweth not how." So is it with the fruit of the Spirit ; it is a personal matter, belonging

Our Silent Partner

expressly to the character. It is produced in us and it is a part of us.

Fruit takes time: trials are a part of the gardener's cultivation of it; winters of sorrow; nights of darkness; awakening times of revival; scorching suns of temptation; long waiting—all these are in the history of fruit.

What are these fruits? Love that is the miniature of Divine love. What is the Divine love? It is God's longing to impart His own good to us. Divine love—the word used in the original, is peculiar in this; it is active; always seeking to make other people better off than they are. It does not feed itself on other people's goodness. Love has its roots in the one who loves. God does not love us because we love Him first, but “we love Him because He first loved us.”

Joy. Mr. Spurgeon said once: “Joy is peace dancing, and peace is joy resting.”

Production of Character

Joy is a surplus of peace. We see a quiet spring on the hillside ; its waters come and go as silently as the dew falls ; that is peace. But another spring has so full a supply that it shoots into the air, and dances in the sunshine, and fills the air with the perfume of its waters and falls in precious mist on the grass around it ; that is joy. Joy is so full a sense of having our wants supplied that it seeks expression in word, look and deed. A joyous Christian has come to see the infinite supply of his wants, and the omnipotent defence against his dangers.

Peace, as has been said, is that freedom from anxiety which comes from casting our care on God, and from such surrender to Him that there is no longer any willful refusal to walk in His ways. If joy is a flowing fountain, peace is a deep, calm reservoir.

Long-suffering. We need to look into

Our Silent Partner

the thirteenth of 1 Corinthians and the fourth verse to get the full sense—"Love suffereth long and is kind." It is the kind of disposition which suffers without souring that is the fruit of the Spirit. A wicked man may suffer long, but he does not grow kind under it. "Long-suffering" is that disposition which waits a long time under injury before it will begin to ascribe evil motives ; it is slow to suspect wrong, slower to charge it, and slower still to resent it.

Kindness is a quality of the feelings towards others. It is not so much a result of our will to do good, as it is a condition of heart out of which good acts come spontaneously.

Goodness is a general balance of all the man. "A good man"—that is about as large a thing as can be said of any one. A good man stands related to God in about the same way that the word "good"

Production of Character

does to the word "God." The truly good man is God in miniature.

Faith is believing that God is, and that He never fails to reward fully and blessedly the man who walks in His way. Faith under all sorts of circumstances believes that when two paths are before a man, the one that God has indicated is the safer, no matter what evils seem to lie in it, or what promising things may lure us to take the other one. The reward, faith fully believes, is in the path God indicates.

Meekness. Not the quality that is commonly called "meekness." This "article of conversational commerce" is a weak thing. It suggests little more than lack of force. But New Testament meekness is one of the strongest things. Moses was meek. Jesus said : "Blessed are the meek." It is that disposition which does not attempt to avenge one's own injuries. A

Our Silent Partner

meek man quietly bears evil from other men, not from fear of them, nor because he cannot feel the pain of their insult, but because he believes that the evils a man meets in the path of duty will all be overcome, and that God will avenge all such as deserve it.

9 Self-control. This is called "temperance" in the common version. Sometimes men read it as if it were the same as self-restraint. But it is more than that. The man of temperance is not the man who can only keep from doing wrong ; he is the man who can put all his force into doing right. The temperate man is not like a pond of water held in check, but like a stream of water brought to bear on the wheels of a factory. He is not like fiery steeds safely locked in the stall, but like steeds in the harness under a skillful driver. As the Hudson River Railroad enters New York city it goes through a

Production of Character

long tunnel ; through that tunnel several hundred trains go daily. When the fast train from the west comes, the engine is under full pressure of steam. The engineer, sitting with hands on the air-brake and the lever, with his eyes watchful for the coloured lights that tell him whether the section ahead is open or closed, lets the train plunge into the darkness. We who sit in the car feel the slackings or increasings of speed, and hear the “whish” of the air-brakes, and we know that the engine is not restrained ; it is going rapidly, but it is subject to the engineer. All its pent-up power is present but controlled. So the self-control of the Christian is not restraint of power, but control of it. Such a man speaks when speech is proper ; enjoys within the limits of good influence the material blessings of God ; is not under the power of any mastering habit, either of eating, drinking, or speak-

Our Silent Partner

ing ; but calm, self-possessed, directs his own powers to some good end.

What value these "fruits" have for the man, and for the community he lives in ! Men and women rich in them are indeed the "salt of the earth." No crown can be greater than to have such fruits as these.

Sometimes it has been assumed that "fruit" means increase of converts. The ministry of some man is called "fruitful" when he secures many additions to his church. But the "fruit of the Spirit" is not used in this sense in the Scriptures. A man's ministry may not be productive of many converts, and yet he himself may be rich in "fruit" ; and the people to whom he ministers may be filled with the "fruits of the Spirit."

The "fruits of the Spirit" are within the reach of every believer. This is the very thing for which the kingdom of God exists. In Ephesians 4, we read that the purpose

Production of Character

for which "gifts" are assigned is that we may all come unto the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." All the organization and distribution of gifts is made with reference to the harvest of these fruits. God's providences may be the plough, the harrow, the spade, the pruning-hook of the husbandman. These "fruits" are, under God, the result of their use. When the goodness of God fails to produce the fruits it is withdrawn, and the ground is "nigh unto cursing." When the word of apostle and prophet and evangelist, when the gifts of healing and knowing fail to be appreciated, then the "lamp stand may be taken out of its place."

The things needed for a successful cultivation of the Lord's vineyard may change; they may become more or less severe, but the "fruits" will remain the same; "Whether there are prophecies, they will

Our Silent Partner

be done away; whether tongues, they will cease; whether knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part will be done away. . . . Now I know in part; but then I shall know fully, even as I was also fully known. And now abide (and always in demand) faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

PART III

*The Holy Spirit's Partnership
With Some Christians*

Gifts of the Spirit

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But to each one of us, the grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith :

*When He ascended on high
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.*

And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers : unto the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministering ; unto the building up of the body of Christ : until we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ : that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men, in craftiness of error : but speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things unto Him who is head, even Christ : from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.—EPH. 4 : 4-16.

IN former pages we have considered those blessings which come to all Christians from the influences of the Holy Spirit. It might seem at first that

Our Silent Partner

no distinction can be made which can justify the topic of this chapter. It may be asked, Is the Spirit partial? And are not all blessings equally open to all? The answer must come from the book itself. If the passages considered show that some things are done for some Christians which are not done for all, then we will accept it. To the passages we now turn.

The classic chapters on this subject are the fourth of Ephesians and the twelfth of First Corinthians. In Ephesians 4:4-16, the apostle is writing to some Christians who were in perplexity because of their misconceptions of what were called spiritual "gifts." We know that in the first days of the gospel some men had remarkable miraculous endowments. Some could "speak with tongues," some "prophesied," some "healed the sick," etc. But not every Christian had received these gifts. From what Paul wrote we can easily draw the

Gifts of the Spirit

picture of things there. Some people were saying to others, "You are not in the right frame of mind; you do not speak with tongues; you do not prophesy; we have never heard you speak in meeting; and you have been taking medicine when you were sick! You ought to have the Spirit's healing power. Christ's people ought not to take medicine, nor be sick. The devil is the author of sickness and we ought not to let him dwell in us. The right sort of faith heals the sick." Some others, half believing what was said, were in trouble and perplexity, or envious of others' gifts. To clear up their foggy conceptions of this whole matter, Paul wrote: "There is one body, and one Spirit" and "one hope." "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all, and through all, and in all." In the possession of all these great things there is no difference between Christians. But in the mat-

Our Silent Partner

4
5
ter of "gifts" there is a difference, a very great difference. He gave Himself as Saviour for all believers ; but He gave only "some," as apostles, and "some" as evangelists, and "some" as pastors and teachers. "Gifts" such as he has in mind are not for all of the Christian believers, but for some only.

But if this be true, we ask, who can have the "gifts" and how are they to be obtained? Upon what basis are they to be apportioned? Before we consider the Scripture reply, let us reproduce in our imagination the condition of an early Church, *e. g.*, the one in Ephesus. They are a company of new converts. There is not an experienced one among them. There is no Church yet organized : there is no meeting-house, no minister, no New Testaments and few Old Testaments. The most natural thing would be for them to say : "What shall we do? Christian life is before us and we

Gifts of the Spirit

are all unprepared for it. We must have some one as a teacher who knows. Some of us will need the care of a pastor. At times we shall need the encouragement of a prophet. Who will make this his business?" So a little reflection shows us that the circumstances themselves called for a kind of organization, and for various qualifications for duty which did not then exist in the Church or its members.

But that company of believers was not a shepherdless flock. They were under the oversight of the Good Shepherd, who had promised His practical assistance.

In Paul's mind, the superintendence which Jesus has over the Church, was exercised at that time by giving special commissions to various persons to become the leaders and teachers which the Church then needed. These commissions and the power to fulfill them were called "gifts." The commissions were from Him, and the

Our Silent Partner

powers were from Him. These "gifts" were not exceptional natural abilities, as the word is now often used to mean, but they were the extra-natural abilities and the extra-natural consecration of energy to the doing of certain necessary services in the Christian Church. This sense of obligation to devote themselves to certain lines of Christian service came to men from the Holy Spirit. These "gifts" were so apportioned that the Church of each community was thoroughly equipped for its work in "building up the body of Christ until we all attain unto the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

Reading further, we see how the figure of a man still lingers in Paul's rhetoric as an illustration of the Church. "Grow up in all things into Him who is Head, even Christ; from whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together . . . maketh increase of the body unto the building up

Gifts of the Spirit

of itself in love." See how by that one phrase, if there were no other, he teaches us that not every Christian has reason to expect the same "gifts" any more than every joint has the same shape or use ("according to the working in due measure of each several part"). See how he glorifies all parts alike. The man with the "gift" of tongues and the man with a "gift" of healing, each contributes his part to the effectiveness ("according to the working in due measure of each several part"); and if a single part does not perform its function properly, then the whole is proportionately hindered. But when each does his duty he "is (making the increase) of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

Now if this chapter were the only one in which the subject of "gifts" were mentioned, there would be no perplexity about the distribution of spiritual gifts. It is

Our Silent Partner

perfectly plain that the "gifts" to different people differ, and that they are apportioned, just as officers are apportioned in an army with reference to the effectiveness of the army ; and that the apportionment is not made according to our wishes, but according to the wisdom of Christ.

But we have further light in another chapter.

Gifts of the Spirit

(Continued)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away to these dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit, to profit with all. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discernings of Spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.—I COR.

12: 1-11.

HERE we find the same condition of mind among the Christians that we found at Ephesus. People are befogged about spiritual “gifts.”

Our Silent Partner

Some one is evidently going about telling men that unless they speak in meeting in a prophetic way, and have faith to be healed without taking medicine, they do not belong to the real body of Christ. Paul sees that it is not evil intention on the part of the teachers that makes them say such things, but that they are befogged. So he begins his treatment of that subject by saying: "Concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant." Then he clears away at one stroke the erroneous opinion that a man is not a Christian unless he has a "gift" like some other man's "gift." Spiritual "gifts" do not make nor unmake Christians. "I give you to understand that no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." Wherever you find a man or woman who sincerely calls Jesus Lord, that one has the Holy Spirit,—is one of the Lord's people. Such may be immature in faith, but they

Gifts of the Spirit

are Christians. They may be imperfect in conduct, very much so, but they are Christians ; they may hold views that are erroneous, but they are Christians. "Gifts" or no "gifts," faults or no faults, the man who sincerely takes Jesus as Lord has the Holy Spirit. There is uniformity about that matter.

But now about these other matters. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ; and there are diversities of ministrations and the same Lord ; and there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all." How could Paul put the truth more plainly than that ? Not all have the same "gifts." We have the same Lord, and the same God, but He works in us differently. Then Paul goes on to specify : "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom ; and to another the word of knowledge," and so on. How then shall we say that

Our Silent Partner

every man or woman should prophesy? or that every Christian should have power to heal the sick? Passing along we read that: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles?" No. "Are all prophets?" No. "Are all teachers?" No. "Are all healers?" No. Well, if not all are to be prophets, who are to be the prophets? If only some are teachers, who are the ones? And here we find the apostle has been very full and plain. "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." That is, so many and such kinds of "gifts" as will make the Church spiritually profitable to its members. But we read that it is not left to the will of men to say what gifts, nor how many, but "all these worketh the one and the same Spirit dividing to each one severally, even as he will." And then further along,

Gifts of the Spirit

when Paul again uses his favourite metaphor, the human body, he says: "For as the body is one and hath many members . . . so also is Christ." That is, His body, the Church, has many members. But "God hath set the members, each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him." How striking that is! Looking at one's own body we see that a man's hands are not his own invention. It was not left for him to say whether he should have two eyes or four. He was not left to decide, after he should come to years of supposed understanding, whether he would have legs, fins, or wings, for his means of locomotion. "God set the members as it pleased Him." He is the author of our frame. Does not that tell us in the most emphatic manner that a man does not endow himself with the "gift" of a pastor? and that it is not left for us to decide whether we will have the "gift" of healing, or prophesying or ruling? Severally as

Our Silent Partner

God wills, Paul says. We learn from this that it is no certain mark of God's disfavour that a woman does not speak prophetically in the Church. And it is no evidence that a man is unconsecrated because he does not go as a missionary. "No man," said the author of Hebrews, "taketh the honour of priesthood unto himself." And the inference is fair that the honour of being a missionary of the cross, far greater than that of the Jewish priesthood, is not properly assumed without a sense of Divine calling to it. We may be very loving disciples, and yet have none of these "gifts." No humble believer need say: "Well, I am not a real Christian. If I were, I could do what these other Christians do." "Nay, the members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary."

Now passing on to the last verse of the chapter, we find a most noticeable statement. Paul, deliberately, after this careful exposition about "gifts," and after tell-

Gifts of the Spirit

ing them to covet earnestly the best "gifts," writes: "But I show you a most excellent way." If that means anything, it means that however important the twelfth chapter is, the thirteenth of 1 Corinthians is a better chapter to follow than the twelfth chapter. And what is in this thirteenth chapter? It is the "Love Chapter"; that most wonderful of all the chapters for unifying the people of God. A "brotherhood of lovers" are the Christians, ideally.

It is beyond our present purpose to consider this chapter, except as it bears on the subject of "gifts." We are assured that love is better than "gifts" of the Spirit. But in verse eight we are told why. It is because love never fails. Gifts are only temporary things. That is, the special working of the Spirit which creates "gifts" is a temporary working; but the working which gives loving hearts is a perpetual working. "Whether there be tongues they shall fail." The time will come when

Our Silent Partner

the Spirit will no longer give to men that strange power to "speak with other tongues." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14: 22, 23 : "tongues are for a sign . . . to the unbelieving." They never had any value to the believers. He himself spoke with tongues more than they all, yet he says : "But in church I had rather speak five words through my understanding . . . than ten thousand in a tongue." As a matter of fact that kind of "gift" has already, and long time ago, ceased. "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail." He does not mean that prophecies of future events will turn out to be false, but he means that the special working of the Spirit which makes men prophesy will cease. We have some of the "gift" now—men who seem to speak "for God"—for that is the meaning of prophet. "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." That is, the kind of miraculous knowledge which was then being considered. These

Gifts of the Spirit

special "gifts," needed by the Church when it had no Christian history from which to learn, no trained ministry, no New Testament yet written, no established order of discipline or worship, became obsolete as time passed, as experience grew, and as men's thought became more imbued with Christian ideas.

But the time will never come when faith, hope and love will cease to be the marks of the Holy Spirit. Confidence in God will deepen as time passes, until the sin of doubting Him will become hideous. Hope will become a habit of mind, and eternal progress will lure us sweetly on to other and ceaseless victories. The best of blessings, glorifying all other blessings, will be an ever present disposition like our Lord's, a loving disposition. No wonder Paul, while saying: "Covet earnestly the best gifts," when he thought of these fundamental things, said: "I show you a most excellent way"! We find, then, in this

Our Silent Partner

chapter also, when the apostle is making it the very topic of his discussion, that the same idea about "gifts" is conveyed as in the other chapter which we have studied. They are qualifications given to the individual for the benefit of the Church, and they are assigned as it pleases God, not as it seems good to men.

Considering the contents of these two great chapters, as we have surveyed them, several important facts about spiritual "gifts" are evident.

They are special equipment for active ministry to the Church of Christ. Not a universal, but a limited equipment. Given unto some, not unto all. They are essentially gifts to the Church, not to the individual.

They are not vitally connected with a man's Christian character. A man may have a great gift and a small piety. Balaam had the gift of prophecy, but the apostle said he "loved the wages of un-

Gifts of the Spirit

righteousness." Judas went out with the twelve, "publishing the good news and healing everywhere." And there is no intimation that he among the twelve was lacking in "power." Yet Judas was a thief as well as a traitor. The possibility of "gifts" without saving grace seems to be conceded in 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul says: "Though I have faith so that I can remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." There is occasionally a man now who preaches like a notable saint on Sundays and lives like a notable sinner during the week.

"Gifts," when we have them, while they are to be accepted with gratitude, and used with faithfulness, do not certainly show either our Lord's approval or disapproval of our faith. They only show that He sees fit to use us for the advancement of His Church.

It is not for us to agonize in prayer for the possession of "gifts" and then feel re-

Our Silent Partner

bellious because we do not receive them. They are given "according to His will." To complain at our "gift" is to find fault with our Lord. A church may well pray for a pastor to be given and for teachers to be provided, but the "gift" is of God.

Jesus said to the apostles: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." Paul said he was an apostle "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ."

We have seen that "gifts" may cease, or change. This starts a line of questions about the present-day equipment of the Church. Does the Spirit now have an oversight of the Church, and supply it with such gifts as are needed? Most certainly. The Church is called the body of Christ, and while Christ lives the Spirit will animate His body. The Spirit is called "another helping companion"; who will abide with the Church forever. Where there are Christians, there the Spirit is superintend-

Gifts of the Spirit

ing their growth and activity. But the methods are not the same as at first. Then there were no ministerial schools. The believers were mostly unlearned men. Our Lord reached out His hand into the camp of the enemy and touched a learned man, and said: "Paul, I want you for an apostle." These splendid mental qualities were captured, consecrated, commissioned for service and turned on the enemy.

In our day thousands of young men and women have been, by the ordinary providence of our Lord, enriched in mind and heart. It is not often necessary to break into the camp of the enemy to find a man having the material of a preacher in him. But when it is the Spirit does it. The work of the Spirit in "administering" the life of the Church is now more exercised in calling and consecrating men who are already equipped mentally than in supplying extra-natural power. But His superintendence was never more needed and never

Our Silent Partner

more exercised than now. He calls ministers ; He must fill the ranks of the missionary army ; He must give to men of wealth the spirit of consecration ; He must call out the latent talent of administrative ability in churches. When a church will admit Him into the leadership it is built up in faith and knowledge, and believers are added unto the Lord. This truth, that the Spirit of God stands waiting to be a partner in the administrations of the Church, is one that has in it great store of comfort for both pastors and the flocks over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. Let both pastors and churches put away anxiety, and woo a faith in the Spirit's leadership, and a submission to it. Let not envy of others' " gifts " have place, and be not disturbed at small " gifts." Let Christ be head, and we ourselves be content to be the least members of His body, if only as those members we are filling our duty full.

PART IV

*How We Should Deal With Our
Heavenly Partner*

Be Filled With the Spirit

And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things to our God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—EPH. 5 : 18-20.

THIS passage has been a stumbling block to many. We shall clear the way to an understanding of it if we notice that no one used the word "filled with the Spirit" except Luke and Paul in this one place. In Luke's book of the Acts, chapters 2 : 4, 4 : 8, 9 : 17, 13 : 9, and other places we find it used. In all these places it has in mind a certain unusual qualification for a special duty in a crucial time. It accomplished its mission and the man then relapsed into his normal condition. When a new occasion arose he must be "filled" again, but there is not the

Our Silent Partner

least intimation that he was negligent or guilty for his empty condition.

Paul's word is entirely different—that is the Greek word is different—in meaning, and in circumstance.

Probably some of those who read these lines have been half-possessed by the idea that to be “filled with the Spirit” is to have such a “baptism” of zeal and enthusiasm, that one almost puts away his own personality, and is taken, swept along, by the Spirit, without the prominent action of his own judgment or will ; overmastered, taken possession of by the blessed Spirit and made an instrument for holy use. Or, to put it in other phrase ; they themselves, as captains of themselves, step aside, and take a pilot on board to whom the entire management of the ship is given up, and the captain goes below. Their minds when they hear the phrase “filled with the Spirit,” im-

Be Filled With the Spirit

mediately call up Peter with glowing fervour and flashing eye, all unmindful of his danger, speaking the message to the Jews on Pentecost day. Or they recall the story of Stephen, and his face glowing like an angel's gazing with rapture on Jesus. Or, it may be, they remember some lesser exhibition, when they have heard a young Christian, in the exuberance of his joy and zeal, speak with unwonted grace before the meeting of the church. The prominent idea in their mind is that the action, whatever it is, is almost involuntary, because of the overmastering of the Spirit, and it always culminates in preaching the gospel. It would hardly be consonant with this idea that a Spirit-filled man would be holily silent.

These people seem to confound "filled with the Spirit" with instances of ecstatic vision of prophets "in which the internal

Our Silent Partner

suggestion which prompts his utterances neither proceeds from nor is produced by the prophet's natural powers or personal condition. It is a new principle which is infused into his soul, with an energy transcending that which is human." As an illustration of their view a somewhat amusing saying of an Indian child is so true to nature that it is worth repeating. A missionary came to the Indian home. The Indian was away and only a little boy was there. The boy had heard of ministers, and had picked up the idea that they spoke "by inspiration." He was curious to know more about it. So he said to the missionary: "Can you tell when it is coming on?" Much that is said concerning being "filled with the Spirit" seems to have its roots in about the same conception of the matter which the Indian boy had. It is regarded as something that "comes on."

Be Filled With the Spirit

To what extent is this the New Testament teaching? Let us see. The word used here is used many times, but nearly always translated "fulfill." Thus in Matthew: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet"; in John, "My time is not yet full come"; in Romans, "He hath fulfilled the law." All the way through the book the underlying idea is that of a *full measure*. It has no suggestion of enlarging the measure; nor does it hint of a flowing fountain that is not measurable; but it always suggests the cup or the gallon measure, or whatever is under consideration as *just full*. There is great satisfactoriness of feeling when this word can be used. There is no sense of stinginess associated with it. If it is applied to a man, we are not disappointed in him. We expected a measure full and made our calculations on it, and we have just what we expected. We

Our Silent Partner

looked for the train at such a time, and in the "fullness of time" it came. We had so much work to do, and we had just time to finish it. All these are suggestions which the word "filled" gives us. To be "filled with the Spirit" (as Paul's word tells it) does not hint of having some new faculty given us, nor even of enlarged faculties, but faculties just filled. It does not create expectation of visions nor remarkable "revelations," but it tells about that strong, just, confident, healthy, mature Christian life that does not disappoint our expectations. The world expects some things of us and we fill the measure. Some work is to be done, and we are not found laggards. The Master looks for growth in us and we have it. Our measure, such as it is, is honestly full. If we have gifts they are "stirred up." The timid woman is not made a fluent speaker, but she fills a timid woman's

Be Filled With the Spirit

place full. The man who never talks much does not astonish the meeting with fluency, but his naturally scant speech is delightfully used to its full. The man of emotional nature does not become a logician, and reason with the gainsayers as Apollos did with the Jews, but his emotional life is full of gladness. The backward man does not become a leader, but he follows the leader with blessedly satisfactory faithfulness. So far as the word "filled" teaches us, this is the idea of the apostle when he says: "Be filled with the Spirit." He means that according to our ability no one can justly say of us that we ought to do more, or to be better.

Taking this conclusion from the study of the word "filled," let us see how it fits the context. Paul says: "Be filled with the Spirit," and before he finishes the sentence he defines what he means by it: "Speaking to one another in psalms and

Our Silent Partner

hymns and spiritual songs.” (That refers to the meetings. And now he goes on to some other things not in the meeting.) “Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things to our God and Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ: wives to their own husbands as to the Lord. Because a husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the Church. . . . Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. . . . Children, obey your parents in the Lord. . . . Fathers, provoke not your children. . . . Servants, obey your masters. . . . Masters, forbear threatening. Finally, . . . put on the whole armour of God.”

All this list of things is the expression in detail of what the apostle expected from those who were “filled with the

Be Filled With the Spirit

Spirit." These things are all involved in his thought as the plant is involved in the seed ; and he seems to be picturing the growth of his spiritual seed up towards maturity.

If a man were to go to Paris to learn the French language, for the sake of a good lifelong position at home, he would make the learning of that language his great business. All his working hours would be spent in such company and reading as would give him the broadest, most correct and fluent use of the language. He would be "filled" with his purpose. An enthusiastic student of medicine, who bends all his reasonable energies to attain knowledge in his profession, is said to be "full of his profession." In the same sense a Christian is "filled with the Spirit" when his one great and controlling aim is to be a good, active, growing, useful Christian in the best sense. We cannot escape that con-

Our Silent Partner

clusion when we read the words that follow the eighteenth verse of this fifth chapter of Ephesians. It does not seem to be a condition of over-mastery and almost involuntary service, but a condition of the most thorough, intelligent, conscious, personal activity and self-mastery, but a mastery that has come from the surrender of self first to Christ; a condition in which the best efforts are made to find out what is duty, the most careful watch is kept over the purity of the heart and speech, and a diligent use made of the means which supply courage and enthusiasm. Instead of the personality sinking out of sight it comes into its most worthy and proper place, with every faculty and every emotion harmoniously working. It is this particular man, with his personal flavour and peculiarities filled full of Christian enthusiasm.

Jesus was certainly the pattern "Spirit-filled" man. And how different His life

Be Filled With the Spirit

was from that which is sometimes called the only kind of Spirit-filled life. He was always calm, but never indifferent. He was always tender, but His tenderness did not at all blunt His severity towards sin. He could say : "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," and not appear inconsistent when He said : "Ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?" He could be lifted up in contemplation of God, without losing His contact with His fellow men. He lived much in the future, and yet was occupied greatly with the realities of the present. He preached, He prayed, He mingled with men socially, He ate with publicans, and with Pharisees ; no class of people was beyond Him ; no condition of men was uncared for by Him. His example is our safe and sure definition of a Spirit-filled life.

To be "filled with the Spirit," as Paul uses the term, is to enjoy the full, free, glad

Our Silent Partner

operation of our natural powers in a Christian fashion and from Christian motives. A Spirit-filled man is not satisfied to let the Spirit lead a part of his life, and cleanse a part of his heart, and control a part of his activities, but he seeks for this control in all of his life. It amounts to a call for whole-hearted surrender to Christian aims in life, and full submission to Divine guidance ; to be good not only in prayers and in words, but good in business, and in social missions. As the tide, when it rises, fills all the nooks and inlets and runs into the bays, lifting every ship higher, so the Spirit, when one is "filled," comes into all departments of life. It is not merely a quickening of our evangelistic spirit, and a freshening of the emotional life. It is a thing not only for a prayer-meeting and to be sought for on prayer-meeting nights, but is an every-day, every-place matter, and is to all our religious life what abounding

Be Filled With the Spirit

health is to our physical power. The fullness of the Spirit, instead of wearying our hearts with a zeal that exceeds our strength, makes life in its best sense a joy to be lived.

What we need is a zeal "built up" not simply "stirred up"—food as well as stimulant.

We have found nothing in these studies which gives us reason to think that the filling of the heart by the Spirit of God lessens the need for personal activity, or modifies the personal peculiarities of the Christian ; but all the study shows that it does lift the man up into a sphere of life higher than he was in without it. It gives him clearer perception of the truth ; it gives him greater courage ; it endows him with increased power, but it is that kind of power which is born of normal, healthy, personal life. His daily life is full of holy activity, and his heart full of holy emotions, instead of being half full or even less than half full.

Cultivate the Partnership

Therefore, let us also . . . run with patience the race set before us looking unto Jesus.—HEB. 12: 1-3.

AS soon as we begin to seek below the surface for the truth about this work of the Spirit, we find questions arising: "Is this a matter which comes along in its course, as apples follow blossoms? If I keep myself in a not rebellious frame of mind, will the natural outcome be, that as the summer comes and makes the trees to blossom, so the passing of years will bring to me that full vigorous spiritual health which is meant by a Spirit-filled life? Is this filling by the Spirit a second conversion, to be received, and perhaps dated with as marked a place in memory as one's conversion to Christ? Is there to be as clearly defined a change in life as comes to the convert in his early

Cultivate the Partnership

days of Christian experience? Is it my duty to 'believe' in the Holy Spirit as I did 'believe' in Christ, committing myself to this third Person of the Trinity, for this second blessing of sanctification, as I did submit myself to the second Person for my justification? Is it the result of a process of discipline by which my life is to become sanctified?"

The answer to these questions is not wholly to be found in connection with an inquiry about our duty, but such an inquiry will throw light upon them.

When we examine the passages in which the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian is referred to, results of two kinds, entirely distinct from each other are found. We saw this difference when we considered "Gifts" and "Fruits." One comes on a Christian, the other springs up in him. Now the first of these, after the initial pentecostal baptism, came always by apostolic

Our Silent Partner

agency; *e. g.*, in Acts 8: "Now the apostles in Jerusalem hearing that Samaria had received the word of God, sent to them Peter and John . . . who prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit . . . then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." We are not informed by the record just what gift they had, but it was something to be seen and heard, for Simon Magus at once offered to pay a sum of money if the apostles would tell him how they did their part of the work.

Again, in Acts 19: 6, speaking of those twelve Ephesians who had not until then heard "whether there is a Holy Spirit" we read that: "When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

In Acts 10: 44 it is recorded that at the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit fell on

Cultivate the Partnership

all who heard the word of Peter's preaching.

This kind of Spirit-filling is not a duty for us to perform. Peter would not say to a man: "You ought to speak with tongues."

This kind is a "gift" delivered by the hands of apostles. This kind of result ceased when the apostolic hands were laid to rest. It has no existence now. But there was another kind of results which even apostolic hands did not have power to accomplish. Paul might possibly lay his hands on the twelve Ephesians and they could speak with tongues, but he could not lay hands on them and make them "walk worthy of the calling with which they were called with all humility and meekness, with long-suffering bearing with one another in love." He could not lay hands on the Galatians and drive out the Jewish legalism, but he must reason

Our Silent Partner

with them and lead them to a better faith by the blessing of God on the truth ; and “ travail again in birth ” until Christ be formed in them. He could not go to Rome and by putting his hands on men lead them to “ present their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God ” ; but he must beseech them by the mercies of God to do so. This latter kind of filling, and such results, are duties for us to do. They are results to be sought for earnestly.

We have among us nowadays men who are called “ divine healers ” (we will not here inquire about either end of their title, but they will answer as an illustration to the thought). These men lay hands on people and they are supposed to be made well. There is no medicine given, no course of diet, no outward appliance, no change in habits ; all the ordinary machinery of physical health thrown out of

Cultivate the Partnership

gear, and the healer's power applied directly to the malady. The sick are passive. They have no duty but to submit to being made well. This is not the sort of spiritual health-getting which the Scripture teaches, or which observation suggests. There are some things about our religious life which come quickly and immediately upon faith. The blessing of forgiveness and acceptance into Christ's family is immediate. When a man has apprehended the call of the gospel to him, and has accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour, he has at once a blessing from Christ that is as direct as the stilling of the waters when Jesus said: "Peace; be still." And the Christian of much experience has the memory of other times when his prayers for strength, or for guidance, were answered by immediate supply.

But the things that are more prominent in the New Testament are not received

Our Silent Partner

thus. A short survey of the exhortations of Scripture will show that a patient continuance in good intelligent habits is necessary to secure what are called the fruits of the Spirit: "If ye continue in My word ye are My disciples indeed." "Watch and pray." "Love your enemies, pray for those that persecute you." "Abhor that which is evil." "Provide things honourable in the sight of all men." "Whatever things are true, . . . think on these things." The underlying wisdom and philosophy of these statements show that they were made with the expectation that men would seek for their realization with diligence. They are all in the active voice. They are all hortatory. There is almost no trace of the passive voice in the New Testament in connection with the Christian's life. So it becomes a matter of imperative duty not simply to desire this Spirit-filling, and even to pray for it,

Cultivate the Partnership

but also carefully to cultivate it as a vine-grower cultivates his vines. One may not in justice to himself, say : " This is a difficult subject, I will let the students consider it ;" nor may he say, " It is too abstruse for me." It is the duty of every Christian to be Christlike, and when he is Christlike the Spirit fills him.

This imperativeness of the duty has been too often overlooked by preachers and laymen. " Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus," was the plain teaching of Paul, and the duty of it remains unto this day.

How to Cultivate the Partnership

Seeing that His Divine power has given us all things that belong to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue ; through which He has given us precious and exceeding great promises, that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature, even for this very reason, adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue ; and in virtue, knowledge ; and in knowledge, self-control ; and in self-control, patience ; and in patience, Godliness ; and in Godliness, brotherly affection ; and in brotherly affection, love. For if these things are yours, and abound, they cause that ye shall not be idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacks these things is blind, not seeing afar off, having forgotten the cleansing away of his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, earnestly endeavour to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things, ye will never fall. For so will be richly supplied to you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—

2 PETER I : 3-II.

IF the preceding chapters have accomplished what the writer intended to have them accomplish, the readers are already asking with a new interest: "How can I be filled with the Spirit?"

How to Cultivate

In attempting to give the answer, the writer is not indifferent to the fact that some brethren, whose intelligence and piety are highly esteemed, have arrived at conclusions somewhat different from his own. But it may be that the whole picture of the truth needs his view of it to be complete. It is certainly given with a great sense of the importance of the subject. The efficiency of the Church depends upon the attitude it takes to the subject. It is a complex question. Here, for example, is a sickly man. His flesh is scanty, his muscles weak, his nerves unstrung, his eye sunken, his breath short, his appetite fitful, sleep disturbed, mind uneasy. There yonder stands a man with every muscle firm, and lithe as a fox's muscles; he looks out of two full honest cheerful eyes; he breathes eighteen a minute; his pulse is eighty; he eats with relish; he sleeps

Our Silent Partner

like a child; life is a joy to him. If that sickly man were to ask: "How can I be filled with health like that man?" the answer would be a complex one. Such a result implies change in food, in habit, in thought, in religion. Yet such is the nature of this question we are considering.

If a preacher says: "Tell me how I can be filled with power to preach the gospel in the manner it deserves," no man could give him a short answer. It calls for the cultivation of the body, mind, heart, faith, spiritual insight, knowledge of human nature, and besides this, a godly daily life. For him to become a preacher worthy his message requires the cultivation of all his being.

We cannot hope to do more than consider some of the greater things which Scripture and experience show to be absolutely necessary. At the outset it must be remembered that our natural constitution

How to Cultivate

is from God. He made it. And that constitution provides certain ways of stimulating and directing our minds and our hearts. The reason is not quickened by show of miraculous power but by exercising itself. The affections are not kindled by overmastering fear, but by presenting something to love. The power of will is not developed by any process that leaves the will idle. Faith cannot be forced upon men, but must be cultivated ; it must grow up in them, fed by its proper nourishment ; mere stimulants of the emotions will not promote its growth. The Holy Spirit is not limited to the natural constitution. He works from above it, but He does not work contrary to it. If a man's will is to be reached, the Spirit reaches it by presenting some great motive that overpowers all other motives. If his heart is to be softened, the Spirit uses something that will move his emotions. Parents who are wise

Our Silent Partner

study the natural disposition of their children, and seek to stimulate a latent ambition in one, to check a dangerous appetite in another, and to cultivate a budding faculty in still another ; but they seek in doing these things to work with the natural bent of the children. A study of the facts confirms the opinion that, in a somewhat similar way, our Heavenly Father works along the line of the constitution He gave us at the outset. Or, to put it in another form, God made the natural constitution of the flowers, and He so arranged it that the flower grows on the stalk, and the stalk from the root. The spirit of life works from the root, through the stalk to the flowers. We never expect to secure any improvement in flowers by any process which ignores the law of the plant life. No man, however pious, would pray for that. It would be called almost blasphemy for a man to bring a small pot of sand, and a

How to Cultivate

sickly root of a carnation in it and say :
“Lord, Thou knowest that I love carnations. They tell me of Thy wondrous wisdom ; and I know Thou lovest them because they are the works of Thy hands. Wilt Thou for my sake, and Thy sake, fill this weak, sickly plant with the spirit of health and crown it with luxuriant growth of beauty and fragrance?” Every reader of this would declare the man to be an empty-headed trifler with sacred things ; and you would say to him : “ You had better go to work and fertilize that sand, and put the plant in the warm sun and care for it well, and wait a bit.” It does not seem irreverent to imagine the Heavenly Gardener saying to such a man : “ Yes, I do delight in carnations, but I delight in roots also, and stalks, for I made them all. Shall I put My roots to shame by ignoring them ? Shall I dishonour My stalks by labelling them ‘ useless ’ and working without them ?

Our Silent Partner

Shall I leave you out of My account by giving you no part in this work? No; I can work a miracle when it is necessary to assert My control of things, but I cannot dishonour the very constitution of flowers which I made. It would reflect on My own wisdom. But if you will work with Me, I will work in the plant and together we will crown it with beauty." So the Heavenly Father may say to those who agonize for Spirit-filling without using the appointed means of getting it: "My child, did I not create your moral constitution? Did I not make it so that 'fruits' should come from the use of your judgment and your will, and your affections, and your faith? Did I not so arrange it that in all your life you might have something to work for and something to aim at? For you now to pray that your passions shall be all restrained without your effort; your mind enlightened without your study; your heart

How to Cultivate

purified without your diligence, is to dishonour the work of My own hands when I made your mind and heart, and to put you out of a most glorious partnership with Me."

Because this idea is so fundamental let us follow it further. Turning to the Scriptures we shall see that both Jesus and the apostles assumed in their teachings that the natural constitution was to be used and honoured.

Jesus, when He would incite men to diligence, appealed to their hope of future reward by giving them the parables of the talent and the pounds. When He would shame men out of their selfishness He spake the words of the twenty-fifth of Matthew. When He would wean the Jewish apostles from their devotion to the temple He informed them that the temple would be destroyed. When He would give their faith in Him a great uplift He showed Himself with

Our Silent Partner

unusual glory at the Mount of Transfiguration. In the apostles' writings the same recognition of our mental constitution appears. Paul wins the attention of heathen by the show of miracles; but he secures the respect of the Christians by giving them the evidence that Christ sent him. He beseeches the Romans "by the mercies of God." He would guard the Philippians from the darts of evil by telling them to "think on things lovely." He encourages the persecuted by singing songs of victory to them from the very prison windows in Rome.

Now if all the appeals and all the warnings of Scripture thus recognize the natural constitution of man as the channel through which the life of the Christian is to be made fruitful, then it follows that a thoughtful conformity to that constitution is a part of our duty in seeking this Spirit-filling we so much desire. Far be it from any of us to

How to Cultivate

minimize the help of the Spirit in our endeavours—for without Him we can do nothing—but we must seek His help in accordance with His directions, and in harmony with our moral and mental constitution. Then we may expect He will “work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.” In accordance with this idea let us consider some of the ways of attaining it.

First of all : Cultivate faith in Jesus as our God-sent Saviour. In all the Scripture, faith in Jesus is given as the condition of the Spirit’s help. No man, refusing the Son of God, has any promise of the Spirit. He could not receive the Spirit’s help, for Jesus said : “The Spirit will not speak of Himself but will take of Mine and show it unto you.” The more our faith in Him increases towards heavenly proportions the more ready will be the heart for producing the “fruit of the Spirit.” Anything that stimulates faith helps us to be “filled with

Our Silent Partner

the Spirit." How, then, shall we have more faith in Him? Paul says: "Faith comes of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." If the men of Israel had known the facts about Jesus they would not have disbelieved. If all men now knew Jesus as angels do all would believe in Him. John wrote: "We shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is."

Second: Study and think about Jesus. Seek quiet, prayerful hours, and let the imagination create from the Scripture teachings the character of Jesus. Think of His coming into human form. Recall His kindly life. Remember His gracious words to sinners, and His pungent rebuke of all sinfulness. Picture His cruel, dishonourable death, and His burial. Consider the meaning of the resurrection, and that only the special power of Almighty God could accomplish it. Complete the meditation by thoughts of His ascension,

How to Cultivate

recalling that now He is directing, and will direct, all the affairs of the Church until all the earth shall honour Him, and His enemies be all ingloriously defeated. Let us do this often until thoughts of the self-giving love, and the glorious kingship of Jesus are habitual with us. Paul said: "I have known Jesus after the flesh;" that is, he had thought of His human nature and work; "but now know I Him so no more." He had come to a much better and higher conception of Him. This is why he was content to know nothing among the Corinthians but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We never can have a healthy faith without a good knowledge of Jesus; and a good knowledge of Him will increase our faith.

Third: Persevere in Christian duty. Fruit does not come in a day nor a week. Many people begin zealously, but fail to find satisfaction, because they become discouraged too soon. Jesus said that some

Our Silent Partner

seed falls by the wayside and takes no root. Other seed springs up quickly, but the first hot sun kills it. Other grows well, but cares and riches and pleasures choke it so that it brings no fruit to perfection; but some "hold it fast and bear fruit with patience." That element of patience is most important. Jesus said: "Abide in Me." That does not mean: "Come and make Me a visit once in a while"—"abide" is our word for "live." "Where do you live?" we say, when we want to find out where a man's home is. "Make your home in Me"; that is equivalent to "Hold yourself in fellowship with Me and stick to the business of doing My commandments; let not the sun of temptation or the heaviness of your burden dishearten you, but remember I have said: 'He that abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit.'" Then, as if He would give us extra in-

How to Cultivate

ducement, He says: "If ye abide in Me, and My word abide in you, ask whatever ye wish and it shall be done to you." This does not read like a promise to do things to others for us, but it reads: "It shall be done to you." Any real desire for Christian graces, which springs out of the presence of Christ's word in us, will be satisfied. If we really want to be patient people, or brave witnesses, or kind, or unselfish, or self-controlled, or gentle, it shall be done to us. Only give our Lord a chance to work in His way. He will not speak the word and the New England tree be made to hang full of fruit in March, but, as the psalmist said concerning the man who delights in the law of the Lord: "He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that bringeth forth its fruit in its season." "His own fruit season"—that is important. It needs the "abiding," the

Our Silent Partner

early and latter "rains" ; but the abiding brings the fruit.

Fourth : Practice doing the will of Christ. It is never intimated in Scripture that the grace of the Spirit is a something to be attained, and that then one may retire from service ; but it is a condition of heart that comes in connection with doing His will. It calls for the active taking hold of our duty as that duty is made known to us. If we recall the men of our acquaintance who are said to be men of spiritual power, we shall see that they are not men upon whom there came some ecstatic vision, or some overmastering impulse which took them along into duty without effort, but they are the men who went at the work before them with determination. None of these was so "filled" that he needed no determination, but each saw the needs of men, and so felt the love of Christ himself that he

How to Cultivate

said : " I will do what I can, I will testify and exhort," and he began to do it. His natural will power was not suspended, but used to the full. He did not sink his personality, but he called all his personality into the work. He was not "sinking out of self into Christ," but Christ was sinking deeper into him. He was not less himself and more Christ, he was more himself and better self than ever. He lived as he had never lived before, a higher life than ever before, because in Christ he found nobler aims, and grander inspiration and greater help than he had known before. Paul did not say to us : " Throw your body and all its powers away as a sacrifice to God !" but he said : " Present your bodies as a living sacrifice !" —not dead ones, nor mutilated ones, nor shrunken, shrivelled ones, but living ones, practicing ones.

This is dwelt upon because of the fear

Our Silent Partner

that many are longing for something to come upon them, and when it comes they hope to do noble service. It almost seems as if much of the cry for the Holy Spirit's help is,—unconsciously no doubt, but truly,—a kind of moral and spiritual shrinking from the effort of doing. If the feeling were translated into honest words they would be like these: "Lord, I dread to make the effort to do. Do it for me." Certainly this is not the right view. At the feeding of the five thousand the disciples brought what food they had to Jesus. In His hands, under His blessing, it grew to abundant proportions. And in this manner what we are must be laid on His altar.

We must be "labourers together with God." In nature, when the seed is in the barn, the spirit of life does not thrill it. The farmer does not say: "I am waiting to feel the spirit near, and when I do I will plant my seed." Infinite wisdom and

How to Cultivate

power lie in the earth and air unknowable until the seed is planted; and then, oh, with what alacrity and joy all nature's forces begin to work to create the fruit! The spirit of plant life is known only through the planting. So it seems that the action of the Spirit of God we are here considering never shows itself to a man except in company with an effort to do the will of God; and never shows itself to Him except in the results of obedience. We never see it, but we see its results in a man's kindly face. We never hear it, but we hear its results in a woman's loving words. We do not realize its courage except when we see a man bravely doing his duty. The voice of Jesus to the man with the withered hand seems to come ringing down the ages to us: "Stretch forth thy hand, thy untrained hand, thy long unused hand, thy timorous hand! Fear not, I will give it power, only stretch it forth!"

Our Silent Partner

When our Lord was going away He said : " All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." What unlimited measure that is ! All power ! Power to restrain man's wrath, power to open man's mind to truth, power to uphold the preacher.

Well, why not exercise it all by Himself ? It was not His way, but He says : " Go *ye* therefore, and *I* am with *you*, always, even to the end of the world." The man that *goes* on the errand of obedience will have Jesus with him. But Jesus is with us by the Spirit. To have the Spirit one must *go* in the road of obedience. No amount of waiting or praying will bring it until the foot lifts, or the mouth opens, or the hand moves, or the will surrenders to do what He commands.

How to Improve the Spiritual Partnership

And it came to pass in those days that He went out into the mountain to pray and spent the whole night in prayer to God.—LUKE 6 : 12.

And He spoke a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray and not to faint.—LUKE 18 : 1.

Pray without ceasing.—I THESS. 5 : 17.

IN all this study, and in all the writing of these pages, one word of Jesus has seemed to be echoing in the writer's mind, as if to guard both the writer and the reader from what is always a danger : namely, cutting ourselves off from the Saviour—and that word is : “Without Me ye can do nothing.” The tendency of the present-day mind is to reduce all things to a system and make Christian life automatic. This tendency is especially liable to appear in any study of the human

Our Silent Partner

agency. It is the old problem, in another form, of man's freedom and God's sovereignty. But there is no uncertainty about the duty to pray and the privilege of prayer. In the lower sphere of our life one may do the duties of life, and reap some of the rewards without it. There is a strong self-control to be gained by discipline. Power to talk with men about Christ may be cultivated by force of determination. Speech may be restrained by setting a resolute guard at the lips. Something like fruits of the Spirit may be produced thus ; but there will be a great lack of that peculiar charm, that precious flavour of the fruit, which is found in the truly Christian lives. And that charm comes from being lifted up into a higher fellowship with the Spirit of God. It comes from a clearer view of the great truths of the gospel, and a more vivid sense of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus.

Improve the Partnership

Sometimes the whole mind and heart has an unwonted vigour and freedom. That condition comes from waiting upon God. It might be said that such waiting is a condition of heart that makes it possible for the Spirit to act—but it is not for us to attempt to comprehend the mysteries of His work beyond what has been taught us by the Saviour—but it is our privilege and our duty to keep our hearts in an atmosphere of prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, for the pervading influences of the Holy Spirit. The personal freedom to draw near to God is not to be infringed upon, nor restrained, by any ideas about the importance of man's own constitution. To *pray* for the filling of the Spirit does not imply any ignoring of duty to be filled by Him, but rather our study of the duty prepares the way for us to receive Him. All Christian experience tells us that the times when the vigour of our spiritual life

Our Silent Partner

has been full and strong, have been when we were accustomed to hold interviews with our God ; when we put away thoughts of our surroundings and communed with God ; or, to use the word of the Scripture, we came "boldly to the throne of grace that we might find mercy and grace to help in time of need."

No theory about anything must be allowed to appease the hunger of our souls for such interviews, or to lessen our sense of absolute need of them. It is very much to be desired that our views of truth be consistent with life and with Scripture. There is greater power for us in such views than in erroneous ones. But an erroneous view of some doctrine, if it be coupled with a glad spirit of prayer to God, is much better than a most accurate system of theology, devoid of the living hopeful habit. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." So the living dog of an ignorant faith in

Improve the Partnership

God is better than the lion of a brilliant orthodoxy which is dead. But we are not compelled to choose between a living dog and a dead lion. We have hope for a correct knowledge and a joyous free faith. Our God instructs us to pray, and by all means encourages us to pray for the showers of blessing, for the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

Christian history as well as nature itself tells us that life is not a monotonous level of activity; there are seed times and harvest times; there are winters and summers; but God is in them all. If it is a time of winter for our souls yet we may pray God to help us do the work of winter. If it is a time of harvest we may pray for the spirit of labourers in the harvest. But a prayer for the Spirit at all times, under all circumstances, is not simply a condition of vigorous spiritual health, but is a part of that health itself.

Our Silent Partner

To those who watch the spirit of the age and the drift of thought in the Christian world two elements are very evident. One is the activity of Christians in evangelistic directions. All our church machinery is adjusted to this work. The uneasiness of ministers is largely due to unsatisfied longings for conversions. The hymn-books bear witness to the same activity. Even the unchristian world measures the churches by that standard.

On the other hand, the desire to systematize and rationalize the lines and methods of Christian work is strong, and this has an element of great value in it. If both these elements can be married together, the whole force of both the practical and the prayerful spirit be blended together, the results will be very blessed. Never in history was the ever guiding hand of Jesus more evident than now. The fact that this age of such critical study of Scripture as,

Improve the Partnership

by its very nature, and by some of its purpose, tends towards weakening faith in some cherished ideas and religious institutions, has come at a time when the world, as never before, is face to face with the Scripture, and seeking its practical truths, guarantees that the outcome will be more truth and better methods. And if the Christian community is generally led to an intelligent *cultivation* of spiritual fruitfulness, along with the zealous seeking of an "endowment of spiritual power" in accordance with our constitution, we shall see great things for the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord.

If the young people who are now so zealously searching for truth, and seeking cultivation that they may serve the King better, can see the truth that spiritual fullness comes by intelligently doing Christ's commands, and that heart comfort comes by abiding in Him, the country will see a

Our Silent Partner

great refreshment of spirit. There will break out in places now silent songs of praise, and places now spiritually desert will become gardens of the Lord.

(3)

Printed in the United States of America.

GOULD LIBRARY
EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE

NEASE LIBRARY EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE
BT121 .H62 1919 GOULD
Hobart, Alvah Sabin/Our silent partner :



3 2999 00024 3472

Gould BT 121 H62 1919 39
Hobart, Alvah
Our silent partner.

DATE	ISSUED TO
MAR 29 '93	C Whetstone 837

Gould BT 121 H62 1919 39
Hobart, Alvah
Our silent partner.

